

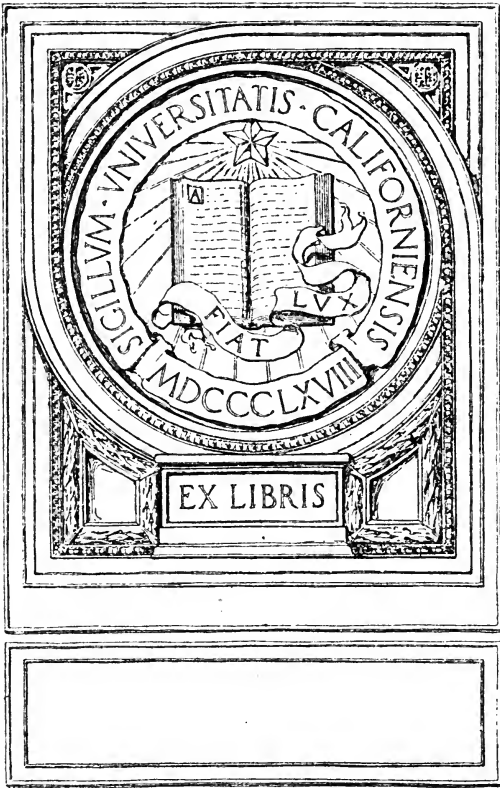
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The Post-Scriptum: a
Comedy in One Act: by
Emile Augier: Trans-
lated by Barrett H. Clark

Samuel French: Publisher
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BARRETT H. CLARK

GENERAL EDITOR

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*THE
SUNSHINE
SUNDAY
SCHOOL*

EDMOND GOT,

Dean of the Comédie-Française.

MY OLD FRIEND,

We have arm in arm made our careers together, aiding each other on the way. At this moment as we are nearing the end, as we are almost touching the goal, I think it well for us to show our friendship *coram populo*, and by way of doing so, I beg you to accept this dedication which I offer you

with all my heart,

ÉMILE AUGIER.

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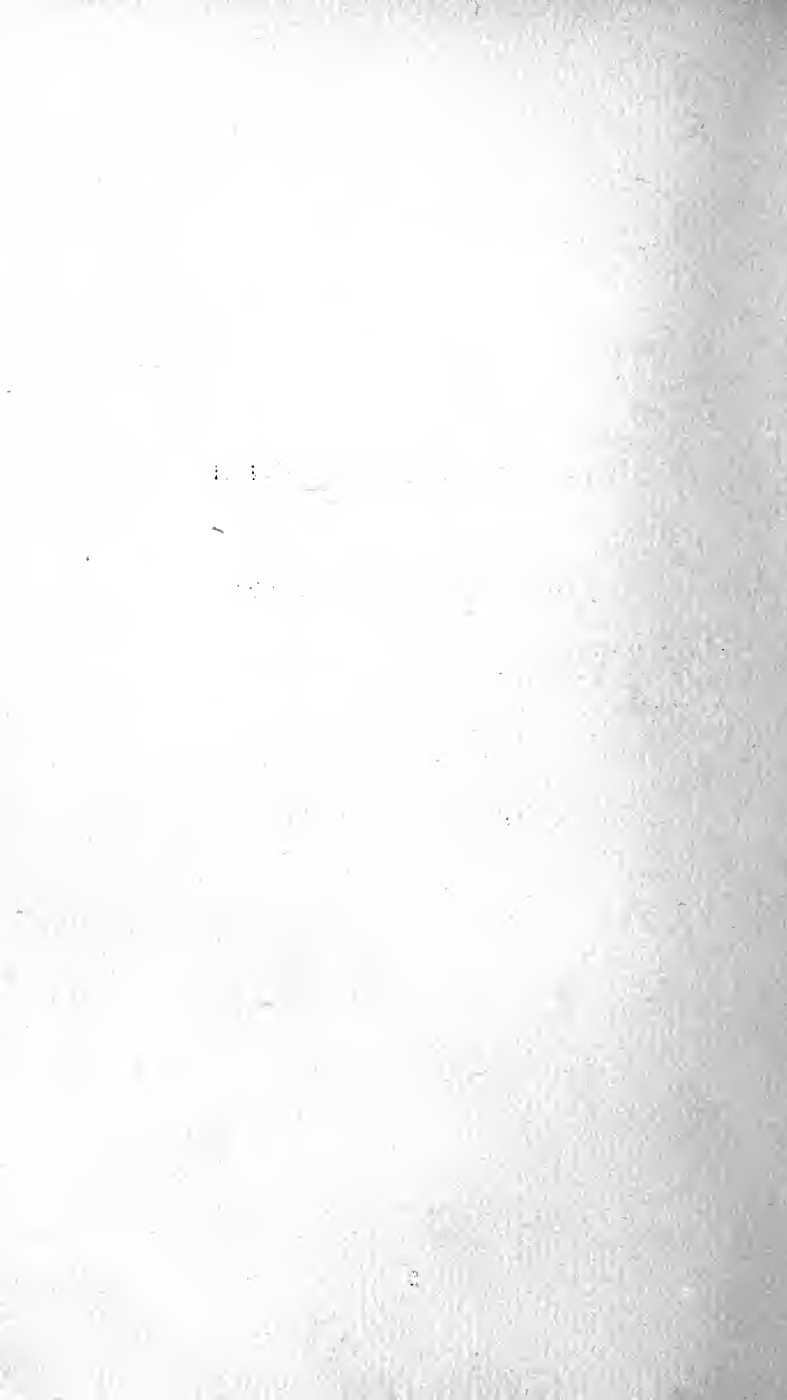
THE POST SCRIPTUM

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

M. DE LANCY
MME. DE VERLIÈRE
A SERVANT

SCENE:—*Paris.*

TIME:—*The present.*



THE POST SCRIPTUM

SCENE:—*An elegantly furnished room. There are two entrances at the back; at the right a fire-place; center, a table.*

As the curtain rises, MADAME DE VERLIÈRE is discovered wearing a loose gown, seated by the fire-place, cutting the leaves of a book. M. DE LANCY enters a moment later, right.

LANCY. (*At the threshold*) I beg your pardon, neighbor, it's I. Please don't scold your maid—she kept telling me you were at home to no one. But I told her that a landlord *was* no one: that argument succeeded. Now, must I go?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. It's very lucky that it is you!

LANCY. Is the book so very interesting?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I don't know, I'm only cutting it. Now you are here, my dear Lancy, you may wait with me. That's what I am doing.

LANCY. (*Noticing that her hair is powdered*) Who? Oh, the Carnival?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Heavens, no. I shouldn't think of being powdered so early for the ball.

LANCY. What then?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. What is the mystery, you think? I can't keep secrets from you: well, I've had an Athenian Water hair-wash this morning, and I use the powder to dry my hair. Now are you

6 THE POST SCRIPTUM.

satisfied? By the way, thank you for your present. You are the king of hunters and a model proprietor.

LANCY. You are possibly right as to the first compliment, but the second——

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I'm already afraid; are you thinking of raising my rent?

LANCY. Worse: I am going to give you notice.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Are you joking?

LANCY. All my courage as a gentleman and a man of the world would be insufficient to tell you; therefore I must speak as a business man.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Could the business man not wait until to-morrow?

LANCY. Impossible. According to our contract, six months' notice is required. Now the fatal term expires to-day; to-morrow you enter into the next. I should be very much put out——

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. You are a frank hunter.

LANCY. Woodsman, if you like!

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. You go straight to the point.

LANCY. Possibly.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. "Possibly" is good! May I know the reason for this—ejection? You must have a reason, I imagine?

LANCY. And an excellent one. Have you time to listen to me?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I might have. And I confess I'd like to find a good excuse for you, for I'd be sorry to lose you.

LANCY. I warn you, it's quite a story.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Take as much time as you like—if you can't finish, you may continue to-morrow.

LANCY. (*Sitting down by the table*) I'll begin: left an orphan at the age of twenty-four——

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. The story of your life? Then why pass over the years of your childhood?

LANCY. Well, if you insist, I'll start from the

beginning, the way Tristram Shandy does, especially as there is a clock connected with my birth—as with his.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Good.

LANCY. Don't be afraid. My mother often told me that she had a large clock in her room—with a gong—and the moment I was born it joyously struck noon. A lucky portent. So that from birth I have been of a happy and humorous disposition, which age has not yet been able to modify. I have an inexhaustible fund of energy—bad for melancholy.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. But excellent for egotism. Take care!

LANCY. Don't believe that. The only good people are the healthy ones. You certainly should know something about it, you who cared for your late husband.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. That's true.

LANCY. Well, at the age of twenty-four I was the possessor of a good-sized fortune; I had a good name——

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. And you at once hastened to reduce the former and——

LANCY. Tarnish the latter? Oh, no. My time was too much taken up with hunting to allow me to do anything else. I've always detested the sight of a card, and, let me tell you——

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Never mind the details.

LANCY. Just sufficient to make my point. I have spent my life up to now in quest of the ideal woman. I have often been mistaken. In society, out of society, I have carried my fruitless search. Where, where, was the heart that would give itself freely, without afterthought—I don't bore you?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Oh, no.

LANCY. Well, I'll be brief. Finally I had passed the age when a man marries with his eyes shut, and I could look forward only to a marriage of reason. It's extremely difficult, you know, to see any reason

why I should marry! But at last I think I have found the woman.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I'm very glad to hear it.

LANCY. One moment! I have not yet been accepted.

MM. DE VERLIÈRE. You will be. I don't see how it can be helped: you are charming, in spite of your infamous methods—but we are losing sight of what you first said to me.

LANCY. On the contrary, I am coming to that. As a bachelor, I could be quite content with my one floor, but the moment I rise to the position of a married man, I must also rise to the next floor.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I see. You wish to put Madame de Lancy in my apartment?

LANCY. (*Rising*) That's it.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I forgive you, because your motive is good. Though it is inconvenient to move. I'm a creature of habit, and I've become used to my place here.

LANCY. (*Leaning on the back of MADAME DE VERLIÈRE'S chair*) You won't have to do that: stay!

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. But what about Madame de Lancy?

LANCY. She can't possibly object, so long as——

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. So long as——?

LANCY. You change your name.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. What do you mean?

LANCY. By ceasing to be known as Madame de Verlière, and taking the name of Madame——

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. De Lancy? Heaven forgive me, but I think you are proposing?

LANCY. To tell the truth, I think I am!

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*Rising*) How long it takes you to come to the point!

LANCY. And you were blaming me not long ago for being so outspoken.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*Standing by the fire-place*)

My fault. So then, I am to be your partner in a marriage of reason? Why, you're not at all polite.

LANCY. Pardon me, we must get down to definitions. What the world calls a marriage of reason, is a marriage in which neither the heart nor the eyes are consulted: where one marries a woman one wouldn't ordinarily care to have as a sweetheart, where one takes her forever—that I call not a marriage of reason, but a madman's marriage.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Very well; your statement needed some modification. You are a curious man.

LANCY. In what way?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. In every way—the way you pay court to me.

LANCY. How do you know? I've never paid court to you.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. There's your first proof of originality. The way you have just asked me to marry you—why, I'd have to look hard to see in you a sighing swain.

LANCY. Sighing is not in my character. If you give me a good reason why I should sigh, I shall be glad to do so, as well as anyone.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. But are you sure you love me?

LANCY. As sure as that I breathe and live.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I had no idea of your love.

LANCY. Nor I. If anyone had told me of it a month ago, I should have been very much surprised.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. How did you finally know? I'm surely not a coquette?

LANCY. No, you are not. Well, this fire-place is the cause of it all.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Really?

LANCY. At first, of course, I knew you only by sight, but I was in danger of never really knowing you at all, for your mourning would have kept me away from you always if that good fire-place hadn't taken to smoking—and opened your door to me.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. And it still smokes, when the east wind blows.

LANCY. I'll make a note of it. ^fFrom that day on, I dreamed of nothing but further repairs—a strange dream for a landlord. That should have warned me. So, one thing led to another, and I found myself here in your apartment; I admired the simplicity in which you lived while you were mourning your husband—I soon began to feel the effect of your charming personality. When and how did that friendship change to a more powerful sentiment? I cannot say. But, consider that I had resolved to end my bachelorhood soon, and that only last week, I heard of a very advantageous union into which I might enter. Well, *that* particular one inspired me with disgust, and I somehow felt that my heart belonged entirely to you. During the past week I have been worrying and trying to make up my mind to ask you to marry me—I behaved like a much younger and less-experienced man. Now, it's over with, and I tell you, I am not sorry.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*Going up-stage behind the table*) My poor friend, I really like you; you are the most gallant man I know.

LANCY. That's a bad beginning.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I too was deceived as to the appearance of our "friendship," and I am not conscious that I have in any way encouraged—


LANCY. I displease you—I rather suspected it! I should have said nothing at all. Well, imagine I haven't spoken, and allow me my corner here by the fire-place.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. You will be welcome as long you wish to come.

LANCY. That will be always.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Ever if I marry again?

LANCY. Oh, no. You're not thinking of that, are you?



MME. DE VERLIÈRE. What if I did?

LANCY. Don't say that!

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. You must know of it some day.

LANCY. Really, are you—? No, no, that's out of the question. I've never seen anyone here who could possibly be thought of as——

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Here, no, but was I not telling you that I expected someone to-day?

LANCY. I was prepared for everything but that.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Don't look so desperate. All of my heart that remains for me to dispose of, you have. I should not object to accepting your offer if I loved no one else. What better can I say?

LANCY. What consolation is that? Only for my wounded pride. *It* needs none. I should prefer to have you displeased with me, and have you care for no one at all. You might at least have kept that secret from me! If you think you are consoling me——!

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. No, only I think I can cure you. In a matter of this sort, the best way is to have it over with as soon as possible.

LANCY. Cure me? Then you're telling me doctors' lies? I'm not so simple as all that. I should have suspected that you were waiting for someone—the way your hair was fixed——

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. But, I tell you——

LANCY. Some absent beloved one? And you chose precisely the day of his arrival to put that flour in your hair——!

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Now allow me to tell you a little story. (*She seats herself to the right of the table*)

LANCY. (*Sitting at the opposite side*) Two if you like. (~~You may well be proud that you have quite alarmed me.~~)

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Do you know Madame de Valincourt?

LANCY. Her husband is one of my best friends.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Three years after she was married she contracted typhoid fever, during which her hair turned white.)

LANCY. Yes?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Her husband adored her. So long as she was in danger, it was a question of whether he would survive her. She did recover, as if by a miracle——

LANCY. Her hair turned white——

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Her hair turned white,) and ever since, her husband spends his evenings at the club. What do you say to that?

LANCY. Well——

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*Rising*) Well,) (Do you excuse him?)

LANCY. (*Laughing*) To a certain extent. A fine young fellow adores a brunette—she suddenly becomes a pepper-and-salt Eurydice. She's another woman.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*At the fire-place*) You are all the same! Let a woman be good, loyal, sincere—it makes no difference: it is the tint of her hair or the curve of her neck that means everything. Become a coquette, a flirt, be as selfish as you like, his love will remain; but be careful of the first gray hair, the first line—good-by, happiness! “I’m very very sorry” he will say. And I pitied you not long ago!

LANCY. Please—what have I to do with all this?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*Returning to the table*) And you make excuses for Valincourt—you would even follow his example, if the opportunity arose. You might at least have the courage of your convictions.

LANCY. Let us try to be reasonable: are you attacking me or Valincourt?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. You, and him, and your whole sex. I am attacking that disgusting way

your love places us on a par with animals—somewhere between hounds and race-horses. Is that clear? (*She returns to the chair where she was first sitting, near the fire-place*)

LANCY. (*Rising*) Very clear. Every woman who prides herself on her delicacy of feeling, objects to being loved for her beauty. She wants to be loved only for her soul.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Ridiculous, isn't it?

LANCY. I don't say that, but you see man is a brutal creature, who loves only with his eyes.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. That is why I blame him.

LANCY. Unfortunately, that is a natural law to which both sexes are subject, yours and mine, in spite of all argument to the contrary.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. How infamous!

LANCY. Now, Madame, tell me frankly: if you loved some one, and he came to you one day maimed and crippled, wouldn't the deformity throw a little cold water over the warmth of your affection?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. You know very little about women, my friend! ~~When we love a man, we think only of his intelligence and his heart. We scarcely know if he is light or dark.~~ If such a case as you mention occurred, we should be doubly tender and affectionate—to console and help him.

LANCY. For a week.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. For a life-time.

LANCY. I should like to see you put to that test.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. If I were only sure that he would not succumb to the test I am preparing for him!

LANCY. Who?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. The man I am expecting.

LANCY. You still insist that someone *is* coming?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*Rising*) That is the reason why I am so—well, this flour! I'm going

to tell him that my hair has turned white during his absence, and that I must now powder my hair to conceal the defect—the—what did you call it? Pepper——?

LANCY. And salt.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. And salt.—And if I see the least sign of hesitation in his eyes, then everything is at an end. (*She goes toward the right*)

LANCY. Are you sure of that?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I am positive.

LANCY. Then, will you allow me some hope?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. No, I should then retire from the world and bury myself at my estate: Verlière.

LANCY. (*Smiling*) Have you no place for a friend at Verlière?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Please don't joke about it. When I think of this trick I am going to play—?

LANCY. Then why play it?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Ah!

LANCY. But will you at least allow me to know the result?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Yes.

(*Enter a Servant.*)

SERVANT. (*Appearing at the left*) Madame, Monsieur de Mauléon is here.

LANCY. (*Aside*) Monsieur de Mauléon?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Good. I'll be there directly.

X
(*The Servant goes out.*)

LANCY. (*Distantly*) It's he? Why didn't you tell me at first? I should have gone without saying a word.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Why so? Do you know him?

LANCY. (*Taking his hat, which lies on the table*)

Slightly. I only know that he is a consul, that he has been in India during the past two years.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Well?

LANCY. You are a widow—pardon me. (*He goes toward door at the right*)

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Monsieur de Lancy! (*He stops*) I don't wish you to misunderstand about this gentleman. I should like to deserve your esteem.

LANCY. You are too good, Madame.—Monsieur is waiting.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. One moment: it was I who asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs to have Monsieur de Mauléon sent away.

LANCY. Well, you are right in not loving me: I don't deserve it. I have offended you.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Yes, but you didn't displease me. You at least were original and you now don't offer to do the conventional thing. That shows that my reputation means something to you.

LANCY. (*Going toward her*) Your happiness, too, take my word for it.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I believe it.

LANCY. Then may I ask a simple question? Do you know that a short time after his installation Monsieur de Mauléon made love to the daughter of a rich merchant?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I know it. What then?

LANCY. If you know—well, that is all.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I was not free when I knew him. Why should I ask him to sacrifice his life for a hopeless love? He has no money; marriage is part of his career, and I have no doubt that that marriage he tried to contract would have taken place had he not been so heart-sick, and consequently so careless in his love-making.

LANCY. You are so indulgent that I find it hard to explain you.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. You are so severe that I can explain you only too easily.

LANCY. I must admit that I am partial. I would give a great deal to be your father or your uncle for five minutes!

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. But you are not.

LANCY. So I remain silent. Good-by, Madame, I wish you all happiness.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. And I wish you to speak. Why do you behave this way about a man whom you scarcely know?

LANCY. Scarcely—but what I do know of him is characteristic. I acted as second to an adversary of his, and let me tell you that *we* were not the first to cry "Stop!"

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Were you Monsieur de Saint-Jean's second?

LANCY. Then you know about the affair?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Everything. Monsieur de Mauléon was altogether in the wrong; he wouldn't admit it, but it was I alone who made him offer an excuse. Nor was that the only mark of affection he gave me. I felt so deeply about it, that it became necessary to send him away. You are rather unfortunate in your method of attack, my poor Lancy—but, you are right: Monsieur is waiting! Good-by. *(She goes out)*

LANCY. She loves him. *(A pause)* Doubtless she will tell him of her trick the moment she has tried it. Why should I wait here? For the wedding invitation? *(He sits down by the fire-place. Another pause)* Hope? *(He rises)* Go away? I can't stay down-stairs, while they are having their honeymoon up here! No, my wood's the solitude of the country—

(After a few moments, during which LANCY is plunged in meditation, enter MADAME DE VERLIÈRE. She enters slowly, not seeing LANCY,

who is at the left, and throws a visiting card on the table. Then she sits in her chair by the fire-place.)

LANCY. (*Aside*) Ah! She seems so thoughtful! (*He coughs*)

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*Turning around*) It's you!

LANCY. Back so soon? Then, did Monsieur de Mauléon—

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*Preoccupied*) Oh no, he was perfect. Not a moment's hesitation. He even thought that white hair was more becoming to me.

LANCY. And is that why he left so soon? *But*

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I asked him to leave me to myself for a little while. He is coming again this evening for tea. After this strenuous morning, I must pull myself together. I'm so glad to find you here now.

LANCY. May I be drawn and quartered if I know why I am here! Good-by, Madame.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I don't want you to go—not in the least.

LANCY. Do you want me to be present at your triumph?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. My triumph? Ah, yes, I ought to be the happiest of women—but I am almost sad.

LANCY. Great joy, they say, is nearly as trying as great sorrow.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. That isn't it, it is—all your fault.

LANCY. Mine?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. What you have said about Monsieur de Mauléon is troubling me a great deal.

LANCY. I am more troubled than you, Madame. When you left the room, I began looking into my

conscience, and to blame myself for saying such things as I did.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Really? Then restore my faith; you will be doing me a great service. Sit down. (*LANCY sits on a chair at the opposite side of the fire-place, his back half-turned to the audience*) I think too much of you to allow myself to think well of a man who has not your good opinion.

LANCY. (*Resigned*) I have no reason to refuse my esteem for Monsieur de Mauléon.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Now I can breathe again. And that love-affair in India——?

LANCY. You said it yourself; could he——?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Never mind what I said—— what do you think? Only tell me that you would have behaved as Monsieur de Mauléon did; that will satisfy me.

LANCY. I would have acted as Monsieur de Mauléon did.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. At the end of three months?

LANCY. Time has nothing to do with it.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Pardon me: either Monsieur de Mauléon forgot me too soon, which would be most ungallant——

~~LANCY. His return proves that he is not that.~~

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Or, what was still less gallant, he was offering a heart which did not belong to him.

LANCY. You should not blame him for that! At any rate, he lost his courage at the last moment, because the marriage never took place.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. But did *he* prevent it?

LANCY. Oh——

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*Laughing*) It was his fault, wasn't it?

LANCY. Oh, that is just the point I want to clear up—I must do him justice on this point.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Yet his duel lessened him in your eyes?

LANCY. You see, I did not know he was acting on your orders. Now I agree entirely with you.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*A little put out*) I am delighted. So, my dear friend, if I ordered you to make excuses under similar circumstances, would you do it?

LANCY. Certainly.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Would you even put yourself in a position to receive orders from me? Would you, for instance, tell me beforehand that you were going to fight a duel?

LANCY. Please, Madame, I must be going!

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. No, no, answer me—please.

LANCY. (*Embarrassed*) Monsieur de Mauléon is not very careful what he tells, I must admit. Possibly he liked the idea of appearing in a dangerous position before you. That's no crime, of course.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. But he must have known what I would do?

LANCY. (*Carefully*) He was making the greatest sacrifice a man can make for a woman.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Do you think so?

LANCY. ~~And just now you have put him to a conclusive proof.~~

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. ~~Conclusive? You think so?~~

LANCY. ~~Undoubtedly.~~

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. ~~You should keep to your opinions: you are a perfect weathercock.~~

LANCY. ~~How do you make that out?~~

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Tell me, do you believe that men love in a vastly different way from women?

LANCY. Oh, you know I am a brute.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*Rising*) So are all men—more or less. So that, if they have only one way of loving, and if Monsieur de Mauléon does not love

me that way, then he does not love me at all. ~~You should at least try to be logical.~~

LANCY. How quickly you argue!

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*Looking at herself in the mirror*) Then isn't it extraordinary, his complete indifference to my—what shall I say?

LANCY. Your beauty.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Yes. If I possess anything that is worth looking at, it is my hair. I hardly think he noticed it.

LANCY. (*Smiling*) He loves your soul.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Don't make fun!—And then, if he doesn't really love, just see what I must think?

LANCY. What?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*Reseating herself opposite LANCY*) You don't seem to want to understand anything to-day! Didn't I tell you he was without a fortune?

LANCY. You are blaming him for it.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Oh, I don't know what I think! I'm so nervous! My dear Lancy, you were wishing not long ago you were a relative. Imagine that you are, and advise me. Please!

LANCY. I should be far too prejudiced.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. No. You are the incarnation of loyalty. I will obey you blindly.

LANCY. I advise you to marry me.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I didn't ask you that.

LANCY. But that is all I can say.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Tell me truly, do you think he loves me?

LANCY. I love you too deeply to doubt it.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*Rises impatiently, goes across to the table, then returns quickly to LANCY*) Well, if he loves me, so much the worse for him; I refuse to marry him. I am sorry to have to disagree with you—

LANCY. (*Rising*) Do you think you are disagreeing with me? I am the happiest of men.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. You are entirely wrong, my poor Lancy, for I refuse to marry you too. I am not so tired of my widowhood as that. If you wish to remain my friend, very well, if not—

LANCY. I do. But, tell me, if I had nothing to do with this sudden change of mind, what did Mauléon have to do with it?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I have told you everything.

LANCY. Everything? Is there no *post-scriptum*? Women always have them.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Not the faintest shadow of one. (*She sits down at the left of the table*) Now, what must I do? I am not consulting you—you are perfectly horrid to-day.

LANCY. A woman always has the right to take back her word.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I have never given mine.

LANCY. Not just a few minutes ago?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. No. I don't know what instinctive prudence prevented me, though!

LANCY. (*Standing at the opposite side of the table*) Nothing simpler: he is coming to tea this evening and then——

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I wish he wouldn't.

LANCY. Then write to him.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. I've written to him too often.

LANCY. He has letters from you?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Not many, and they are not in the least compromising.

LANCY. Return his, and he will return yours.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*Looking into the table drawer*) Here are his.

LANCY. Where does he live?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. He left his card—(*She points to the card on the table*)

LANCY. (*Takes the card, goes toward the door,*

then retraces his steps) When shall I see you again?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. Will you come to tea?

LANCY. (*Bowing*) With pleasure.

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. (*Still looking through the drawer*) Oh, I forgot this little case. Take it with the letters.

LANCY. (*Taking the case*) A picture?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. No—a lock of hair he sent me. He won't be sorry to have it.

LANCY. Hasn't he any now?

MME. DE VERLIÈRE. He's as bald as the inside of your hand!

LANCY. (*Aside*) The *Post-scriptum*! (*He goes out*)

CURTAIN.

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